

EFFECT OF INDIGENOUS AFRICAN LYRICISM ON THE WRITING PERFORMANCE OF GIFTED ESL LEARNERS WITH DECLINING ACHIEVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

High-achieving English as a Second Language (ESL) writers may experience academic decline characterised by disengagement, writing anxiety and perfectionistic avoidance. This study examined the effectiveness of indigenous African lyricism-integrated pedagogy in improving writing performance, reducing anxiety and enhancing engagement among 60 gifted ESL learners aged 15–18 years from four secondary schools in Sokoto Metropolis, Nigeria. An explanatory sequential mixed-methods design was employed, incorporating a 12-week quasi-experimental intervention. Participants were assigned to an experimental group ($n = 30$), exposed to an African lyricism-integrated curriculum, and a control group ($n = 30$), taught through conventional formalist approaches. Quantitative data were collected through pre- and post-intervention writing assessments, anxiety measures and engagement scales, while qualitative evidence was obtained from reflective journals, focus-group interviews and textual rhetorical analysis. Analysis of covariance (ANCOVA), controlling for baseline scores, revealed significantly higher post-intervention writing performance among learners in the experimental group, $F(1, 57) = 48.32$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .459$. The intervention also significantly reduced writing anxiety and enhanced learner engagement. Qualitative findings corroborated these outcomes, indicating improvements in rhetorical flexibility, dialectical reasoning, metaphorical expression and authorial voice. The findings demonstrate the pedagogical potential of culturally grounded, multimodal instruction in addressing academic decline among gifted ESL writers while strengthening linguistic competence, creative expression and sustained engagement in formal academic writing.

Keywords: Academic Decline; Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy; Gifted ESL Writers; Indigenous African Lyricism; Multimodal Writing

Introduction

Advanced second-language writers are frequently treated as if proficiency were a stable endpoint. In practice, a learner may remain highly proficient in English while becoming less productive, less adventurous, and less engaged as a writer. This distinction matters in educational settings where achievement is commonly inferred from examination scores, previous distinctions, or teacher perceptions of ability. Gifted education research has long shown that high ability does not guarantee sustained academic performance; mismatch between students' strengths and instructional environments can contribute to disengagement and underachievement (Reis & Renzulli, 2004). More recent work associates gifted underachievement with differences in motivation, self-regulation, mindset, and perfectionism (Mofield & Parker Peters, 2019). The present study uses the term high-flyer academic decline to describe a documented downward movement in writing performance among learners who have previously demonstrated high achievement. The term does not imply a fixed psychological type. Instead, it identifies a trajectory that can arise when an advanced learner's intellectual needs, expressive resources, and classroom opportunities become misaligned. For ESL writers, the problem may be compounded by continuing pressure to demonstrate grammatical correctness and conformity to externally defined academic genres.

Conventional composition teaching has important strengths. Explicit instruction in thesis statements, paragraph development, cohesion, evidence, and disciplinary conventions remains necessary for academic success. Difficulty arises when these conventions are taught as rigid templates rather than rhetorical resources. A five-paragraph essay can help novice writers understand organisational principles, but repeated use with advanced writers may narrow the range of rhetorical moves. Writing anxiety can constrain the quantity and quality of second-language production, while perfectionistic concern over mistakes can encourage avoidance rather than productive risk-taking (Mofield et al., 2016; Krashen, 1982; Ahmed Shukri & Salam, 2025). The study therefore turns to indigenous African lyricism not as cultural decoration but as a repertoire of rhetorical and compositional resources. African oral traditions encompass proverbs, songs, chants, storytelling, repetition, parallelism, imagery, audience participation, and performance. Okpewho (1992) identifies repetition, parallelism, tonality, imagery, allusion, and symbolism among important stylistic resources in African oral literature. Such resources can be translated pedagogically into academic writing tasks. Call-and-response can be reframed as a model of claim-counterclaim development; proverbial compression can prompt exercises in conceptual condensation; rhythmic repetition can support attention to cohesion and emphasis; and oral narrative stance can provide a bridge into controlled authorial positioning (Nompula, 2011; McConnachie, 2026; Dat, 2026). This approach aligns with culturally sustaining pedagogy (Paris, 2012) and multimodality (Kress, 2010).

Statement of the Problem

Research on ESL writing has produced substantial knowledge about supporting learners with limited proficiency, yet considerably less attention has been directed towards high-achieving writers whose performance begins to regress after they have already acquired advanced linguistic resources. This population can be difficult to identify because a learner who once performed exceptionally may still appear competent even while the quality, originality, and frequency of writing deteriorate. At the same time, culturally responsive language pedagogy has increasingly challenged deficit views of multilingual learners, but empirical interventions connecting African oral-musical resources specifically with advanced academic writing remain limited. The present study addresses this intersection by examining whether indigenous African

lyricism can provide a culturally meaningful and rhetorically demanding pathway for reversing writing decline.

Research Objectives

The specific objectives of the study are:

- i. To examine the cognitive, affective, and instructional factors associated with academic writing decline in gifted ESL students.
- ii. To evaluate the qualitative and textual impact of an indigenous African lyricism-integrated writing pedagogy on students' syntactic maturity, critical analysis, and voice.
- iii. To determine the effect of the African lyricism intervention in reversing academic decline compared with traditional formalist instruction.

Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. What cognitive, affective, and instructional factors contribute to writing decline among high-achieving ESL students?
- ii. How does an indigenous African lyricism-integrated writing pedagogy affect the syntactic maturity, critical analysis, and voice of high-achieving ESL writers?
- iii. To what extent does this multimodal intervention improve the writing performance of gifted ESL learners compared with traditional formalist instruction?

Research Hypotheses

The following null hypotheses were tested at the .05 level of significance:

- H0₁: There is no significant difference in post-intervention writing performance between gifted ESL learners exposed to the indigenous African lyricism-integrated pedagogy and those exposed to conventional formalist instruction after controlling for pre-test scores.
- H0₂: There is no significant difference in writing anxiety scores between the experimental and control groups after the intervention.
- H0₃: There is no significant difference in writing engagement scores between the experimental and control groups after the intervention.

Theoretical Framework

Culturally Sustaining Pedagogy (CSP) provides the first theoretical anchor. Paris (2012) argues that schooling should sustain, rather than merely recognize, students' linguistic and cultural practices. Ladson-Billings (2014) similarly emphasizes the dynamic character of culturally relevant pedagogy. For advanced ESL writers, CSP implies that the cultural resources learners bring to academic writing can function as intellectual assets. Kress's (2010) social-semiotic account of multimodality provides a second foundation: a learner can encounter a rhetorical idea in an oral mode, analyze its organization, and then reconfigure that interpretation as written argument. The affective filter hypothesis provides a third lens for understanding how anxiety and perceived threat may constrain participation (Krashen, 1982). Gifted underachievement perspectives provide a fourth foundation (Reis & Renzulli, 2003, 2004). The present study adapts this principle to academic writing: advanced learners are given a demanding intellectual task, but the route into that task is diversified through culturally familiar modes.

Literature Review

The High-Flyer Paradox in ESL Composition

The high-flyer paradox describes a practical tension: the more proficient a writer becomes, the more visible the limitations of narrow instructional routines can become (Olorunfemi et al., 2025). A beginning writer may benefit from formulaic structures because they reduce cognitive load. An advanced writer, however, may experience the same structures as a

ceiling. For multilingual writers, this question is also connected to voice. Olorunfemi et al. (2026) argue for a translingual orientation in which multilingual writers negotiate meaning across linguistic and cultural resources. The psychological literature strengthens this pedagogical argument. Mofield & Parker Peters (2019) found that gifted underachievers differed from gifted achievers in mindset, organisation, and self-regulation. Mofield et al. (2016) likewise found relationships among perfectionism, coping, and underachievement.

Indigenous African Lyricism as a Rhetorical and Literary System

Indigenous African lyricism is used here as an umbrella term for culturally situated oral-musical and verbal practices that foreground rhythm, repetition, response, proverb, imagery, performance, and communal meaning-making. It is not treated as a single homogeneous African tradition. Proverbs provide a useful entry point because they compress observation, evaluation, and metaphor into short verbal forms (Asimeng-Boahene, 2014). Call-and-response offers a second resource whose dialogic structure can be translated into academic argumentation (Foster, 2001; McConnachie, 2026). Rhythm and repetition constitute a third resource that can be translated into parallel syntax, controlled anaphora, and strategic sentence length (Okpewho, 1992).

Empirical Review of Related Studies

Empirical work on gifted underachievement has consistently linked performance decline to motivational and affective factors rather than to deficits in ability. Mofield et al. (2016) reported that gifted underachievers scored higher on socially prescribed perfectionism and avoidance coping than their achieving peers. Mofield & Parker Peters (2019) further demonstrated differences in growth versus fixed mindset and organizational skills. These findings justify attention to the affective and instructional conditions surrounding advanced ESL writing. Within second-language writing research, Ahmed Shukri & Salam (2025) synthesized evidence that writing anxiety and low self-efficacy reliably predict reduced writing performance among ESL learners, although most studies have focused on low-proficiency rather than high-achieving populations.

Studies of culturally responsive and multimodal pedagogies have shown positive effects on engagement and linguistic output. Nompula (2011) found that participation in indigenous African song improved vocabulary learning, cooperation, and listening among South African learners. Foster (2001) documented gains in language mastery when call-and-response structures were used with African American students. Asimeng-Boahene (2014) demonstrated that African proverbs can be employed to develop critical thinking in social studies classrooms. Direct empirical tests of indigenous African lyricism as a sustained writing intervention for gifted ESL learners remain scarce. Olorunfemi et al. (2025) documented determinants of examination decline among high-achieving secondary students in Lagos but did not test a pedagogical intervention. The present study therefore addresses a clear gap by combining a quasi-experimental design with qualitative textual analysis to evaluate a systematically sequenced lyricism-based curriculum for criterion-identified gifted writers experiencing measurable decline.

Methodology

1 Research Design

The study employed an explanatory sequential mixed-methods design (QUAN → qual) embedded within a quasi-experimental pre-test/post-test control-group structure (Ivankova et al., 2006; Fetters et al., 2013). A randomized controlled trial was not selected because intact educational groups made individual random assignment impractical. A quasi-experimental design is appropriate where researchers cannot fully control group membership, provided

baseline performance is measured and statistically controlled (Shadish et al., 2002). ANCOVA was selected because it adjusts post-test group comparisons for pre-test differences.

2 Study Area, Population, and Participant Selection

The study was conducted in Sokoto Metropolis, Sokoto State, north-western Nigeria. Four senior secondary schools: two public (Government Day Secondary School Arkilla and Government Girls' College Sokoto) and two private (Global Kids Academy and Al-Azhar International School) were purposively selected to ensure variation in school type while maintaining accessibility for the intensive 12-week intervention. The target population comprised high-achieving Senior Secondary 2 (SS2) and Senior Secondary 3 (SS3) ESL writers aged 15–18 years who had demonstrated a documented decline of 10–15% in continuous assessment writing scores between Term 1 and Term 2 of the preceding academic year. Giftedness was operationalized using a dual criterion:

- i. prior achievement of $\geq 80\%$ average in English Language writing components across two consecutive terms before the observed decline, and
- ii. teacher nomination based on Renzulli's three-ring conception of giftedness (above-average ability, task commitment, and creativity).

Decline was verified through school continuous assessment records and confirmed by English Language teachers. Criterion-based purposive sampling yielded 68 eligible students; after exclusion of eight students who declined participation or transferred schools, 60 participants remained.

Intact classes were matched on school type (public/private) and mean baseline writing scores. Two classes (one public, one private) were randomly assigned to the experimental condition and two to the control condition, producing balanced groups of 30 participants each. The groups did not differ significantly on pre-test essay scores, $t(58) = 0.27$, $p = .788$. The sample size was pragmatic for an intensive classroom intervention involving repeated writing assessment and qualitative follow-up. The design is not presented as nationally representative; its purpose is to estimate an intervention effect within the defined population and to generate theoretically informed evidence for replication.

Table 1 Participant Groups and Instructional Conditions

Group	N	Instructional condition		Duration
Experimental	30	African	lyricism-integrated writing curriculum	12 weeks
Control	30	Standard	formalist writing curriculum	12 weeks
Total	60	Two-group comparison		12 weeks

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

3 Instructional Intervention

The 12-week intervention was organized into three four-week modules. Module 1 (Weeks 1–4), Dialectics and Call-and-Response, began with listening and oral response activities. Learners analyzed a locally relevant Hausa call-and-response performance, identified the initiating and responding propositions, and mapped this relationship onto claim–counterclaim–synthesis structures. Module 2 (Weeks 5–8), Metaphor, Proverbs and Critical Depth, used selected Hausa and Fulani proverbs as interpretive prompts. Students unpacked literal and figurative meanings, identified assumptions, and transformed concise proverbial statements into extended analytical paragraphs (Asimeng-Boahene, 2014). Module 3 (Weeks 9–

12), Rhythm, Syncopation and Authentic Voice, focused on sentence rhythm, parallelism, strategic repetition, variation in sentence length, and controlled authorial stance. Explicit editing for grammar, cohesion, and academic register followed creative generation. Thus, the intervention did not replace academic conventions; it repositioned them as a later stage of rhetorical refinement.

4 Data Collection Instruments

Four data sources were used. First, a Writing Anxiety and Engagement Scale (adapted from Cheng, 2004, and self-developed engagement items) captured perceived anxiety, confidence, and engagement on a five-point Likert scale. The scale was subjected to expert review by three specialists in second-language writing and educational measurement; the content validity index (CVI) was .92. Pilot testing with 25 comparable students yielded Cronbach's alpha coefficients of .87 for the anxiety subscale and .84 for the engagement subscale, indicating good internal consistency. Second, reflective journals captured learners' accounts of instructional experience, perceived barriers, and changes in writing behaviour. Third, a Textual Rhetoric Rubric assessed syntactic maturity, critical depth, rhetorical organization, and voice on a 100-point composite scale. Inter-rater reliability between two trained markers yielded Cohen's $\kappa = .81$, indicating almost perfect agreement; content validity was confirmed by the same expert panel. Fourth, pre- and post-intervention standardized essay tasks (parallel forms on argumentative topics of comparable difficulty) provided a common outcome measure. Essays were scored independently by two markers; discrepancies exceeding four points were resolved by a third marker. Focus-group interviews (six groups of 8–10 students) were added to clarify quantitative patterns.

5 Data Analysis Procedures

Quantitative analysis involved descriptive statistics, paired-samples t-tests, and ANCOVA. Paired-samples tests examined within-group change. ANCOVA was used for the principal between-group comparison; the pre-test score served as the covariate and post-test performance as the outcome. Effect size was reported using partial eta squared (η^2). Assumptions of normality, homogeneity of regression slopes, and homogeneity of variance were examined and met. Qualitative data were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2021). Essay samples were additionally examined for rhetorical shifts. Integration occurred at interpretation: qualitative themes were used to explain the quantitative pattern.

Results

Factors Contributing to Academic Decline in Gifted ESL Writers

Table 2 Writing Anxiety and Engagement Scores (5-Point Likert Scale)

Measure / Group	Pre M (SD)	Post M (SD)	t(29)	p
Anxiety – Experimental	3.92 (0.61)	2.48 (0.54)	10.27	< .001
Anxiety – Control	3.87 (0.58)	3.71 (0.62)	1.38	.178
Engagement – Experimental	2.61 (0.67)	4.12 (0.49)	–11.03	< .001
Engagement – Control	2.58 (0.64)	2.71 (0.59)	–1.15	.260

Source: *Fieldwork*, 2025–2026

As shown in Table 2, the experimental group experienced a marked reduction in writing anxiety and a corresponding increase in engagement. The control group showed no statistically significant change on either subscale. Survey and journal evidence indicated that 83.3% of participants ($n = 50$) reported a strong perfectionism-related barrier to writing under rigid

assessment conditions. Students commonly described delaying drafting because they wanted an opening sentence or thesis to be “correct” before writing further. A second pattern concerned instructional burnout: participants described repeated formulaic essay requirements as predictable but intellectually restrictive. A third factor was loss of voice; students reported that they could produce grammatically acceptable paragraphs while feeling that the writing did not sound like them.

Representative journal extracts illustrate these patterns:

“I used to score high, but now I sit for twenty minutes staring at the paper because the first sentence must be perfect. If it is not perfect, I cannot continue.” (Participant E14, reflective journal, Week 1)

“Every week it is the same five-paragraph structure. I already know how to do it. There is nothing new to think about.” (Participant C07, focus-group interview)

Qualitative and Textual Impacts of Indigenous Lyricism Pedagogy

Three themes dominated the qualitative and textual analysis.

Theme 1: Structural Translation through Call-and-Response. Students shifted from seeing argument as a fixed five-paragraph sequence to seeing it as a movement among positions. Textually, this appeared in more purposeful transitions, greater use of concession and counterargument, and more varied paragraph openings.

“When we practised the call and the response, I realised I could first say my point, then let the other side speak, and then come back stronger. My essays started having that movement.” (Participant E03, focus group)

Theme 2: Metaphorical Depth through Lyrical Proverbs. Students initially treated proverbs as complete messages. After analysis, they began treating them as compressed propositions requiring unpacking. Their essays showed greater willingness to distinguish literal from figurative meaning and to connect a local metaphor to a broader argument.

“The proverb ‘The calabash that falls does not break the ground’ forced me to think about responsibility in a way a textbook sentence never did. I used it to open my essay on environmental accountability.” (Participant E19, journal)

Theme 3: Reclamation of Authentic Voice. Students’ reflective accounts suggested that the oral-to-written process lowered the pressure of beginning with a perfect sentence. Speaking first allowed them to generate ideas without immediate concern for surface correctness.

“Before, my writing was correct but empty. Now it has rhythm. I can hear my own voice when I read it back.” (Participant E11, post-intervention interview)

Illustrative textual shift (Participant E08, argumentative essay on education reform):

Pre-intervention opening: “Education is important for development. There are many problems in the education system. This essay will discuss three problems and solutions.”

Post-intervention opening: “When the drum calls and the dancers hesitate, the rhythm itself is questioned. So it is with a curriculum that demands correctness yet starves the mind of dialogue: the learner may still perform, but the performance grows thinner with each term.”

Comparative Efficacy in Reversing Academic Decline

To evaluate the intervention’s impact on reversing academic decline, overall essay performance was analyzed before and after the 12-week programme. Prior to the intervention, baseline essay scores were similar between the experimental group ($M = 72.35$, $SD = 6.82$) and the control group ($M = 71.88$, $SD = 7.05$). Following the 12-week period, the experimental group demonstrated substantial improvement, achieving a post-test mean score of 85.47 ($SD = 5.91$)

with an average gain of +13.12 points. The control group recorded a post-test mean of 73.41 (SD = 6.48) with a minimal gain of +1.53 points.

A one-way analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) was conducted using the pre-test score as a covariate. The analysis revealed a statistically significant main effect for group membership on post-test academic performance, $F(1, 57) = 48.32$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .459$. Adjusted post-test means were 85.21 for the experimental group and 73.67 for the control group. The null hypothesis H_{01} was therefore rejected. This is a large effect: after controlling for the pre-test, group membership accounted for approximately 45.9% of the remaining variance in post-test scores. It should be noted that the quasi-experimental design and the magnitude of the observed gain warrant cautious interpretation; the result indicates a strong association within this sample rather than definitive causal proof generalizable to all contexts.

Table 3: Descriptive Statistics and Essay Performance Scores Across Groups (Maximum Score = 100)

Group	Pre-test M (SD)	Post-test M (SD)	Gain	n
Experimental	72.35 (6.82)	85.47 (5.91)	+13.12	30
Control	71.88 (7.05)	73.41 (6.48)	+1.53	30

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

Paired-samples t-tests confirmed a statistically significant gain for the experimental group, $t(29) = 11.84$, $p < .001$, Cohen's $d = 2.16$. The control group showed no significant change, $t(29) = 1.42$, $p = .166$, Cohen's $d = 0.26$.

Hypothesis Testing for Writing Anxiety and Engagement

Table 4: ANCOVA Results for Post-Intervention Writing Anxiety and Engagement

Outcome	F(1, 57)	p	Partial η^2	Adj. M Exp.	Adj. M Ctrl
Writing Anxiety	62.14	< .001	.521	2.51	3.68
Writing Engagement	71.89	< .001	.558	4.09	2.74

Source: Fieldwork, 2026

To test H_{02} and H_{03} , one-way ANCOVAs were conducted with pre-test scores as covariates. For writing anxiety, the analysis revealed a statistically significant difference favouring the experimental group (lower anxiety), $F(1, 57) = 62.14$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .521$ (adjusted post-test means: Experimental = 2.51, Control = 3.68). The null hypothesis H_{02} was therefore rejected. For writing engagement, a statistically significant difference favouring the experimental group was obtained, $F(1, 57) = 71.89$, $p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .558$ (adjusted post-test means: Experimental = 4.09, Control = 2.74). The null hypothesis H_{03} was therefore rejected. These large effects indicate that the indigenous African lyricism-integrated pedagogy was associated with substantial reductions in writing anxiety and increases in writing engagement relative to conventional formalist instruction.

Discussion

The findings suggest that high-achieving ESL writers can decline not because they have exhausted their linguistic capacity, but because the instructional environment may cease to offer a productive match for their level of development. This interpretation aligns with gifted education research identifying educational mismatch as one source of risk (Reis & Renzulli,

2004) and with evidence that gifted underachievement can involve fixed mindset beliefs, weaker self-regulation, and perfectionistic concerns (Mofield & Parker Peters, 2019). Perfectionism became visible as a process of delayed production. The findings also qualify a simplistic interpretation of the affective filter hypothesis: the students were not beginners overwhelmed by English; their anxiety was often tied to evaluation, identity, and the fear of producing work below their established standard.

The intervention appears to work through rhetorical recontextualization. Learners encounter a culturally familiar form, analyze its communicative logic, and then transfer that logic into an academic genre. Call-and-response becomes claim and counterclaim; proverb becomes compressed proposition; oral narrative becomes controlled authorial stance; rhythm becomes attention to syntax and emphasis. This finding extends CSP by allowing oral and musical meaning-making practices to influence the architecture of writing instruction itself (Paris, 2012). The findings also support Kress's (2010) multimodal perspective: students moved through multiple semiotic stages: listening, responding, discussing, mapping, speaking, drafting, and editing.

The quantitative finding indicates that the intervention was associated with a substantial adjusted difference in post-test performance. The qualitative evidence helps explain this result. The experimental curriculum expanded the number of legitimate routes into academic writing. The result should not be interpreted as evidence that formalist instruction is universally ineffective. Academic conventions remain indispensable. The more defensible interpretation is that conventions may be more effective when taught as flexible rhetorical resources after students have generated and shaped substantive ideas.

Conclusion

This study examined whether indigenous African lyricism could be used to re-engage high-achieving ESL writers experiencing academic decline. The evidence indicates that the intervention was associated with improvement in overall writing performance and with qualitative gains in syntactic maturity, critical depth, rhetorical organization, and voice. The significant ANCOVA result, $F(1, 57) = 48.32, p < .001$, partial $\eta^2 = .459$, provides quantitative support for the intervention effect within the study sample. Indigenous African lyricism can be treated as a sophisticated rhetorical resource rather than as an extracurricular cultural supplement. At the same time, the study does not establish that every African lyrical form will improve every ESL writer's performance. The most defensible conclusion is that a deliberately designed, culturally grounded multimodal pathway can provide an effective alternative route into advanced writing for learners whose previous performance has begun to decline.

Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Advanced writing syllabi should include oral-to-written activities that allow learners to generate ideas through dialogue, performance, proverb interpretation, and rhythmic language before formal academic drafting.
- ii. Teachers should distinguish between productive explicit instruction and rigid formulaic compliance. Academic conventions should be taught as adaptable rhetorical tools rather than universal templates.
- iii. Schools should monitor performance trajectories among high-achieving ESL writers rather than focusing only on low attainment.

- iv. Teacher development programmes should include culturally sustaining and multimodal composition strategies, with particular attention to the ethical selection and contextualization of local oral traditions.
- v. Assessment should reward intellectual risk, analytical depth, and rhetorical control alongside grammatical accuracy.

Directions for Future Research

Future studies should follow participants for at least one academic year to determine whether gains are retained. Larger multi-site samples are needed to estimate whether the effect is robust across age groups, educational sectors, and African language communities. Replication should compare specific traditions rather than treating African lyricism as a single category. Comparative studies could examine indigenous musical and oral resources from other contexts. Future work should also report full descriptive statistics, confidence intervals, and pre-specified effect sizes to strengthen reproducibility.

Limitations of the Study

Several limitations must be acknowledged. First, the quasi-experimental design with intact classes, while pragmatically necessary, limits causal certainty; unmeasured differences between groups may have contributed to the observed effects. Second, the sample was drawn from a single metropolitan area in north-western Nigeria and cannot be assumed to represent all African or ESL contexts. Third, the 12-week duration, although intensive, does not permit conclusions about long-term retention of gains. Fourth, the large effect size (partial $\eta^2 = .459$) and the 13-point mean gain, while statistically robust within the sample, constitute a strong claim that requires independent replication before generalization. Fifth, although inter-rater reliability for the writing rubric was high, the qualitative analysis necessarily involved interpretive judgement. Finally, the study focused on argumentative writing; effects on other genres remain untested.

Ethical Considerations and Declarations

Ethical approval was obtained from the institutional research ethics committee of Usmanu Danfodiyo University Sokoto prior to data collection (Reference: UDUS/REC/2026/0147). Informed consent from parents/guardians and participant assent were secured. Participation was voluntary and withdrawal was permitted without academic penalty. Participants were assigned pseudonyms; identifying information was separated from research data; and electronic files were stored using password-protected procedures. Oral performances, proverbs, and musical materials were selected and interpreted with attention to community context. No conflict of interest is declared. No external funding was received for the study.

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